



Egg Shape Easter Cassata

8" or 9" sponge cake (you can purchase or make your own, recipe follows)

1-1/2 lbs. Ricotta (24 oz.)

1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar

1/2 cup mixed candied fruit

1/4 cup semi sweet or bittersweet chocolate (chopped)

1/4 cup raisins (light or dark)

2 t. vanilla extract

Garnish Options: Fresh Berries, whipped cream or melted semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate

Soaking syrup:

1/2-cup water

1/2-granulated sugar

1/4-cup liqueur of choice (optional)

Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan, bring to boil until sugar is dissolved and the mixture is reduced by 25%. Then cool and add liqueur.

Instructions:

Filling:

- Place ricotta in a strainer over a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Place weight on top. Refrigerator for 2 hour. If the ricotta has chunky curds press through a strainer over a mixing bowl.
- Add sugar and vanilla and blend until smooth. Fold in candied fruit, chocolate and raisins.
- Refrigerate until you are ready to assemble the cake.

Assembly:

- Cut the sponge cake layer (8" or 9" round) into 1/3" slices. Slice each slice in half diagonally. Each piece will look like an elongated triangle.
- Brush an oval cake mold or a 3-D egg-shape pan with the syrup. (See note below.)
- Begin to line the egg-shaped mold with cake by fitting each piece tightly together so that the pointed end is at the center of the mold and cooked edges line up with cut edges. Trim the excess cake to level the edges.
- Brush cake with syrup.
- Fill the mold with the ricotta mixture.
- Fit the remaining cake on top, fitting small pieces of cake where necessary. Then brush with remaining syrup.
- Place plastic wrap on top and set a plate and heavy weight on top. Place in refrigerator overnight.
- Turn the cake out onto a serving plate. If you wish to freeze the cake invert onto a piece of cardboard covered with foil, then wrap in plastic wrap and in heavy-duty foil. Allow thawing before decorating.
- You can decorate the cake as you wish, such as:
 1. Whipped cream or frosting rosettes around bottom.
 2. Piped chocolate across the top in a basket-weave style. 1-1/2 cup sifted cake flour

Noteworthy: Sicily brought spices from the east and introduced cane sugar for the making of sorbets, pastries and cakes, including the elaborate cassata that heralded Sicily's reputation as a treasure island of sweets.

Sponge Cake Recipe

Pinch of salt
6 T. unsalted butter
6 large eggs
1-cup granulated sugar
1 t. vanilla extract

Instructions:

- ☛ Preheat oven at 375°. Prepare two 8" or 9" cake pans with solid shortening. Line the bottom with parchment paper or wax paper.
- ☛ Sift flour and salt onto wax paper. Then set sifter on a plate. Add the flour and salt again and let set until you are ready to add it to the cake mixture.
- ☛ Melt the butter and remove any foam that rises to the surface. Pour into a small bowl and set aside.
- ☛ Combine eggs and sugar in a large heatproof mixer bowl. Set over a pan containing water that has reached 125°. Be sure water is not too hot. Whisk the egg mixture constantly until all the sugar has dissolved and eggs are light in color and the temperature has reached 110°.
- ☛ Immediately place bowl in mixer and whip at medium high speed for 4 minutes. The mixture will triple in volume and be very thick. Add the vanilla and whip 3 seconds to blend. Remove bowl from mixer.
- ☛ Pick up the sifter and sift approximately 2 T. of flour mixture over the eggs and carefully folding with a rubber spatula. Continue the process until all the flour is used and carefully folding until all traces of flour is blended into the egg and sugar mixture.
- ☛ Add about 1-1/2 cups of egg mixture to the melted butter and fold until blended. Then fold into the large bowl egg and sugar mixture. **DO NO OVERWORK THE BATTER.**
- ☛ Divide the batter between pans and bake for 22 to 25 minutes until the cake springs back when touched. **Do not open oven the first 15 minutes.** When done place pans on wire rack until cooled, and then remove cakes from pans. You can store cake in plastic wrap and foil and freeze if you do not use immediately.

"With a contented stomach, your heart is forgiving; with an empty stomach, you forgive nothing."

Sicilian Proverb



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